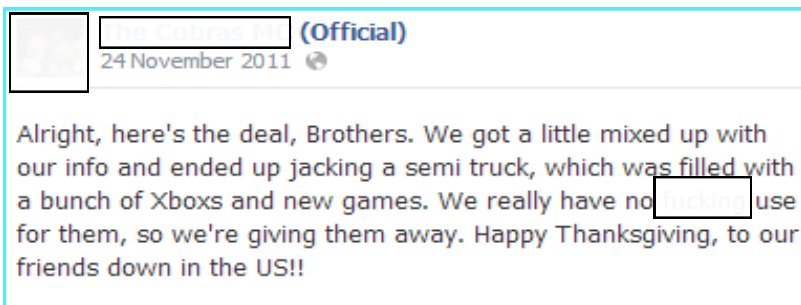


Social Media: A Gang's Breeding Ground

INGangNetwork

As social media becomes a part of daily life, gangs have used networking sites to enhance their criminal motives. Websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogger, Flickr, YouTube, etc. have made it easy for gang members to communicate via social networking.

Why do gang members use social media websites? They are able to communicate with the entire gang instantaneously. The added benefit of cell phones makes using social media a great tool for members, as they can post updates and other gang related comments as they are happening.



“Web Banging”

“Web Banging” or “Net Banging” refers to gang use of social media to glorify the gang lifestyle and criminal activity. “Web Banging” has increased and continues to grow in every state.

Gang recruitment often begins at a young age. Children as young as eight years old are recruited by gangs. Social media is a new way for gangs to advertise the fast cash, girls, drugs, and popularity to a large audience. The use of Facebook allows gangs to highlight upcoming events, often posting group images on walls to show camaraderie and a sense of family.

While many believe gangs use sites such as Myspace, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Flickr to advertise the gang life for recruitment, in reality gangs are not actively recruiting through social media. The main advantage of social media however, is the instant communication capabilities available on such websites. Just as any other user on social media wants to advertise accomplishments, thoughts and ideas, update statuses, and post

photos to highlight themselves, gangs use social media in the same way.

Gangs also order “hits” and trade insults with other rival gangs. No longer do violent messages need to be displayed in graffiti images but rather tweets.

Many gangs will post videos on YouTube showing their rebellious nature and carefree lifestyle. These messages are appealing to a wide audience and are just another form in which gangs promote criminal activity.

The advancements in technology will continue to alter the way in which gangs communicate, thus changing the way law enforcement must approach criminal gang activity.



For more information please visit the INGangNetwork website.

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Encourage your local law enforcement to become members of INGangNetwork. INGangNetwork assists law enforcement and criminal justice agencies working with local communities to help reduce and track gang activity.



To view downloadable safety brochures and products, and to learn how you can get involved visit INGangNetwork at:
www.in.gov/iifc/2329.htm